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AUTHOR Braziel, Dennis J.
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ABSTRACT

Research and experience from throughout the child welfare system have established that maintaining a strong connection between children and their families is critical to ensure positive outcomes for children in out-of-home care. Ways in which administrators and managers in out-of-home care agencies bring a family focus to their policy, administrative, and program structures are emphasized in this handbook. The guide is written for agency managers within the array of group care services, such as residential treatment centers, small group homes, emergency shelters, training schools, and respite care facilities. It is designed to provide practical support to agencies that wish to diversify and refocus their services; its suggestions are supported by research in group care, foster care, reunification, family preservation, family support, and organizational development. The text is divided into five sections: family-focused practice in out-of-home-care, integrating family-focused practice into group care, resource materials, handouts and charts, and appendices. Managers will find a conceptual framework for family-focused practice and for the challenges agencies face when they undertake organizational change, such as changing the agency's culture to value families, or finding creative funding sources. (RJM)

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